

HOW FAR IS IT TO BETHLEHEM?

By Judith Clough

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How Far Is It To Bethlehem

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STORY OF THE PLAY

How far is it to Bethlehem? That question is asked from five different perspectives in this beautiful Christmas one-act play which closes with the traditional nativity scene.

It is simple to produce because each scene can be rehearsed independently of the others. In addition, the play may be presented without music although song suggestions are included. Costumes consist of the standard Biblical pageant variety and props are almost non-existent. It can be performed on a stage, in a sanctuary or even a classroom. There is no need for backdrops or curtains although those may be used if desired. Lighting is not required but cues are provided.

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This play was originally presented by the children of Harundale Presbyterian Church, Glen Burnie, MD., on December 2, 1984.

SYNOPSIS

Scene 1 - Mary and Joseph in Nazareth.

Scene 2 - Three Wise Men in Chaldea.

Scene 3 - Angels in Heaven.

Scene 4 - Shepherds in hills near Bethlehem.

Scene 5 - Manger in Bethlehem.

PLAYING TIME: 45 minutes

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(9 speaking parts plus extras)

MARY: Mother of Jesus.

JOSEPH: Her husband.

BALTHAZAR: Oldest and wisest of the Three Wise Men.

CASPAR: His faithful shadow.

MELCHIOR: One who loves his material comforts.

EVANGELINE: An unhappy Angel.

HEAVENLY CHOIR: A choir of Angels.

MESSENGER ANGEL: Tells Evangeline the news.

BENJAMIN: A shepherd boy who has given up hope.

HEAD SHEPHERD: Comes back for Benjamin.

SHEPHERDS: Follow the Christmas star to Jesus.

COSTUMES AND PROPS

Costumes should consist of a long tunic with belts, and head coverings with bands for all characters except the Angels. Mary wears a pillow under her costume to look pregnant. She and Joseph carry bundles. Angels should be dressed in white with gold tinsel rings for halos. Evangeline may sit on a "cloud." The Three Wise Men each need a brightly colored gift box for the final scene. The Shepherds may have staves, etc. Benjamin needs a crutch and small wooden bowl, and a cloth. The Messenger Angel may carry the message on a scroll and read it instead of memorizing it.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Nazareth. MARY and JOSEPH enter, carrying bundles, packing for their trip to Bethlehem.)

JOSEPH: *(Protesting.)* Mary, wait. I told you I would load the donkey. You shouldn't be carrying heavy things.

MARY: Oh, Joseph, it's just that I'm so excited. Just think, the child will be born in Bethlehem just as the prophecies say. Everything the angel told me is coming true!
(Suggested solo for MARY: First verse of "Come, O Come Emmanuel.")

JOSEPH: Well, I have to admit that I didn't believe it at all when you first told me, but then I saw an angel, too!

MARY: It's truly a miracle, Joseph. Everything is working together to make the birth of God's son very special. Do you suppose anybody else will know of it besides us?

JOSEPH: I don't know, but I'm sure we can trust God to do whatever seems right and necessary to Him. Maybe He will tell others, but where they come from is up to Him.

MARY: *(Crosses to CS, begins to exit, then stops.)* Let's get started. Joseph, how far is it to Bethlehem?

JOSEPH: Not very far for us. I suppose it depends on who you are and where you are coming from.

(BOTH exit, LIGHTS out.)

End of Freeview

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